

Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission
4141 North S. Herrera Way, Phoenix, AZ 85012

September 10, 2015

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners Present

Brett Rustand
Andrew Griffin
Phillip Hanson (via telephone)
Ron Perkins
Ryan Peters
Arlenthe Rios
David Tolliver

AZ Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS)

Wanda Wright, Director
Dave Hampton, PIO/Legislative Liaison
Tera Scherer, Executive Assistant

Invited Guests

Ron Quillen

Call to Order – Chairman Brett Rustand called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Chairman Rustand called for the approval of the July 9, 2015 Veterans Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes. There being no changes to the minutes Commissioner Perkins moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Tolliver seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Introduction and Welcome of New Commissioners – Chairman Rustand acknowledged to new appointed Commissioners to the Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission. Commissioner Arlethe Rios served five years active duty in the Army as a Medic. She resides in Sierra Vista with her fiancé where she serves as the Clerk of the Board for Cochise County Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Ryan Peters served in the Marine Corps before being medically discharged. He is currently the Director of the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions and resides in Chandler with his wife and two children.

Ron Quillen, Goodyear, AZ

Mr. and Mrs. Ron and Gail Quillen of Goodyear presented plans to build a Veterans Memorial Building and Community Center in the southwest valley. Mr. Quillen has approached the Advisory Commission to seek assistance and guidance on the project, as well as conveying the need for such a facility in the Goodyear area.

Mr. Quillen hopes to rent the building out to the community for sustainability and offer the facility to local veterans groups to meet. His hope is to house an information center for veteran.

Director Wright suggested that his first step needs to be securing the land from the town of Goodyear before the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services can commit to providing support. She asked Mr. Quillen to keep the Department informed on his progress.

Agency Announcements and Updates

Wanda Wright, Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services, reports that she and Assistant Deputy Director, John Scott, visited a majority of our Veteran Benefit Offices throughout Arizona in the last couple of months. While on those visits the offices were evaluated for ease of access for veterans, primarily paying attention to parking, ADA compliancy, and the overall appearance of the facilities. Their goal is to provide a place that is warm, inviting and will make a veteran want to visit the facilities.

Director Wright has also been visiting veteran organizations throughout the state. Most recently she visited a group in Sierra Vista and she continues to be impressed with the city's veterans organizations. She stated that the Department will be looking at VSOs (Veteran Service Organizations) throughout the state and looking at what is offered in the rural areas. She hopes the Department will be able to put together a network of VSOs so that they can work together to inform veterans of what is available throughout the state and coordinate with each other for the benefit of our veterans.

The Department has partnered with DES (Department of Economic Security) on DVOP/LVRS (Disabled Veterans Outreach Program/Local Veterans Employment Representatives), which is the veteran component for the employment division of DES that disabled veterans and any other veteran needing assistance with employment, can utilize. Recently the Department was invited to their executive leadership meeting and presented them with some of our specialized training. Currently the Department is working on combined VBC training with DVOP/LVRS training so there will be a warm hand off between the two and so anyone that comes in contact with a veteran at these organizations will know exactly how to begin the process to help them with employment needs.

Director Wright has been working with Director Chuck Ryan of the Department of Corrections (DOC). to create a block of 125 veteran prisoners and created a program that will, up to two years from time of release, help with their reintegration by assisting with the job search, reinstating their veteran benefits, and provide a continuation of care after they've served their sentence.

The Veteran Supportive Campus program continues; a total of 13-14 schools have been recognized now with two or three more in the pipeline for completion. Also with the Veteran Supportive Employers program, up to 20 now that have qualified with DES and DOC being recognized in November for being the first agencies in state government to achieve that status. Governor Ducey has been asked to present those agencies with a plaque as well as to sign a proclamation to make the month of November "Hire a Veteran" month. These programs segue back to the Roadmap for Employment and the strategic plan of getting our veteran unemployment rates down.

Cemeteries are on track to open in January. The dedication is scheduled for Marana for March and June for Bellemont/Camp Navajo.

Budgets were submitted in September and the Department continues to ask for support for a state veteran home in Flagstaff and a home in the western part of the state near Lake Havasu, Kingman, Bullhead City area.

Commissioner Griffin spoke of the Flagstaff area's VSOs collaboration and resource sharing that he has helped to organize. He stated that currently there are about 30 organizations in that area that participate in quarterly meetings. He stated his ability to reach out to leadership of VFWs and American Legions and similar VSOs in other areas to help get them set up and started on their own network of collaboration within the individual areas. Commissioner Griffin opened discussion of the possibility of the Veterans Advisory Commission having a role in organizing this throughout the more rural areas of the state.

Open Discussion for the Good of the Order

Chairman Rustand used this time to review the purpose of the Veterans Advisory Commission. *Click [here](#) to view the presentation.*

Chairman Rustand asked the Commissioners to reach out to their communities within their assigned regions and visit with area VSOs as well as the Department's VBC offices.

Commissioner Perkins reminded everyone of the upcoming Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony coming up on October 23 at the Phoenix Marriott Tempe Buttes Resort. Information is available online at azuav.org.

Commissioner Peters gave an overview of the activities around Phoenix for Marine Week.

The meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m. The next Advisory Commission meeting will be held November 12, 2015, at the Phoenix Veteran Home.

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